

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1. A method for transmitting information over a communications network having multiple switching nodes, said method comprising:
  - determining if a byte to be transmitted is silent, when the byte is silent
  - attaching a flag to a packet that the byte would have been added to for transmission and suppressing the byte;
  - transmitting the packet to another node;
  - receiving the packet at a destination node;
  - un-suppressing the suppressed byte when the flag indicated suppression has occurred; and
  - wherein each node in the communications network recognizes the flag representing a silent byte.